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PREFACE.

THE following facsimiles of Point-Lace are selected from specimens in the valuable collection at the South Kensington Museum, and are published with the sanction of the authorities of that Institution, for which sanction the Author is very grateful, as she is thus afforded an opportunity of diffusing among the public a few antique examples, as standard models of beauty to those who now endeavour to revive the long-neglected art of needle lace-making.

D. W. H.

LIST OF PLATES.

1. FLEMISH LACE. 17th Century. No. 588 in the South Kensington Museum.

2. Pattern by which the same can be worked in braid and stitches.

3. FLEMISH LACE. 17th Century. No. 596 in the South Kensington Museum.

4. Pattern by which the same can be worked with braid, brides, and stitches.

5. PIECE OF LACE IN THE "BOCK COLLECTION." No. 1586 in the South Kensington Museum.

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7. FLEMISH LACE. 17th Century. No. 586 in the South Kensington Museum.

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15. Original design for working lace d'oyley with braid, brides, and stitches.

16. ITALIAN LACE. 17th Century. No. 582 in the South Kensington Museum. This is a curious kind of lace, in which pieces of tape are introduced.

17. PORTUGUESE LACE. 17th Century. No. 584 in the South Kensington Museum. In this piece of lace two distinct patterns are to be seen.

OLD POINT LACE.

THE object of the present work is to assist in remedying a great defect of most modern amateur lace, viz., a mistaken style of pattern. The aim of making lace by hand is to revive the ancient art, of which such beautiful specimens have survived the decay of centuries. So far as the materials employed, and the delicacy and variety of stitches, the same degree of perfection has been already attained by many of our modern workers as by their ancient predecessors. But in spite of the care and industry bestowed, and the great

strain on patience and eyesight involved, there is still one most important portion of the work which continues to be comparatively neglected, and that is, *the design,* in consequence of which neglect, modern point lace is, when compared with old lace, like a body without a soul.

This want of variety and beauty in design is the more remarkable, since the work is chiefly undertaken by the most refined enjoyers of "elegant leisure," who are supposed to possess an amount of delicate fancy and taste, scarcely to be expected from those who "stitch, stitch, stitch," merely to keep themselves alive on bread and tea.

The difference between the patterns now used for point lace and the old specimens is this,—the modern lace consists of an exact and continuous repetition of a design, which is contained in four or five inches of space, whereas the old lace displays a constant variety and change in the pattern throughout

the entire length of the piece; there is also a freedom and originality in the design which constitutes its chief beauty. In this consists the superiority of *hand* over *machine* made lace. The iron machinery can repeat net-work stitches by the million, with greater precision and rapidity than any fair fingers can attain, but at best such repetition is tedious to the eye.

The charm of variety and the beauty of novelty can only be found in the work of skilled hands, guided by fanciful minds, and not in the productions of iron wheels set a-going by steam.

In order to a complete restoration of the art of point lace making, each worker should design and amplify the pattern as the work progresses; but this would require an amount of invention not possessed by many, and to those who have it not, the following pages will be useful. In them are shown exact copies of admirable pieces of old lace pre-

served in the South Kensington Museum; each one is of a different style or period, and is a good specimen of its class. To facilitate the reproduction of this old lace, a diagram for working accompanies each specimen, and in this diagram the design is so modified as to render it easy by the present abbreviated method of working.

In the old lace may be remarked an absence of geometrical precision, and in the most ancient, a certain uncouthness which has a charm of its own, and which contrasts very favourably with many of the patterns of the present day, in which geometrical stiffness and monotonous similarity are the most remarkable features.

It is hoped that this book, by aiding some fair votaries of point lace to really *copy* the beautiful old relics of antique art-work(wo)-manship, may induce them to aim still higher, so that by exerting the fanciful and imaginative faculties so largely possessed by the

refined of the fair sex, they may attain the same perfection in diversity and beauty of design, that they have already achieved in the more mechanical portion of their art.

HOW TO COPY AND IMITATE OLD POINT LACE.

IN order to render the present volume useful to those who are novices in the art of lace-making, as well as to those who are already proficient, it is necessary not only to make a display of beautiful designs, but also to describe the means by which the same designs can be reproduced with needle and thread.

Having procured the necessary materials, viz., linen thread, linen lace braid, cord, and good needles, select a braid of the width

indicated by the pattern, and tack it firmly on to the pattern between the parallel lines. Where a fulness is caused at either edge of the braid by the curves, whip over the edge of the braid, and thus draw it to the shape. Where two braids come in contact, sew them finely but firmly together by the outer threads.

All the varied stitches with which the scrolls are filled, and all the bars or "brides" are produced by button-hole-stitch, worked (as in embroidery) *from left to right*, and each row below the other. Bearing this rule in mind, it is easy for every worker to originate fresh varieties of stitches during the progress of her work.

Venetian or Spanish Rose Point is to be copied without the introduction of any braid. A series of threads (or if preferred a fine cord) should be tacked on to the pattern, following the exact outline of every scroll, and afterwards sewn over, the intervening

space being filled entirely with button-hole-stitch. Attach a needleful of thread firmly to the outline threads or cord at the right-hand side, carry it tightly across the space to

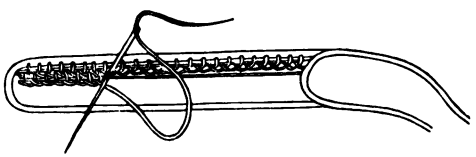

Fig. 1.

the left-hand side and attach it there, then work a row of button-hole-stitch very small and even, taking each stitch through the outline of the scroll, and including in it the thread that is fastened across. Continue to work other rows in the same manner until the scroll is filled up. Observe that these rows of stitches generally run in a horizontal direction with regard to the whole piece of lace, as though the work had been executed as far as possible whilst retaining it in its

ultimate intended position towards the beholder.

Another method of rendering this filling-in stitch still more close and perfect is to be seen in Fig. 2. After fastening the thread

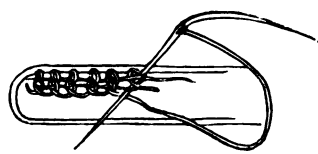

Fig. 2.

across, and working the first row of close button-hole-stitch over it, form the second and subsequent rows by taking each stitch through the close threads of each stitch in the row above, instead of through the loops between the stitches. This causes the stitches to be more square and firm, but in very fine work it adds considerably to the time and care occupied. It will of course be understood that in all these diagrams the stitches

are greatly magnified and separated in order to make the working intelligible. After practising the foregoing stitches, fig. 3 will easily be understood without further explanation, and after working that, the fair lace-maker

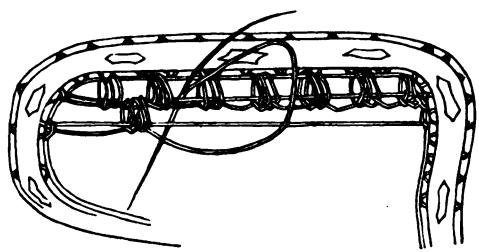

Fig. 3.

will perceive that by increasing the number of stitches to four or five and shortening the loops, a chessboard pattern is produced; and that by shortening the stitches and lengthening the loops, a dotted network is made. Another variety is shown in fig. 4. Work a loose button-hole-stitch all round the interior of the scroll; for second and subsequent rows, take each stitch through the loop above, and

then knot it, by passing the needle a second time through the same loop, and drawing it tight before commencing another stitch. This

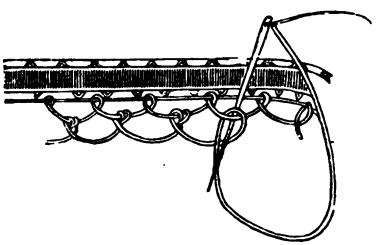

Fig. 4.

construction may again be changed, by working the second row and knots between the two threads of the button-hole-stitch, as shown in fig. 5; but for this square network it is necessary to make the loops much longer than in any of the stitches previously described. Bars or "brides" are made by working very tight button-hole-stitches round one thread (or more) that has been fastened across from one scroll to another. If bars are required broad and flat, fasten two, or

more, threads across, and then darn them together instead of button-hole stitching.

Having now described all the deviations of

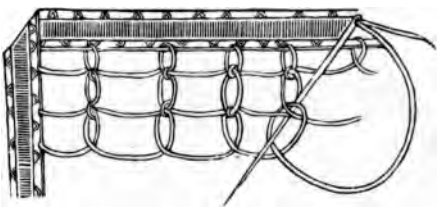

Fig. 5.

stitch necessary in carrying out the lace designs in the present volume, it is hoped that every worker will add to their beauty and originality by introducing additional varieties of her own fancy.

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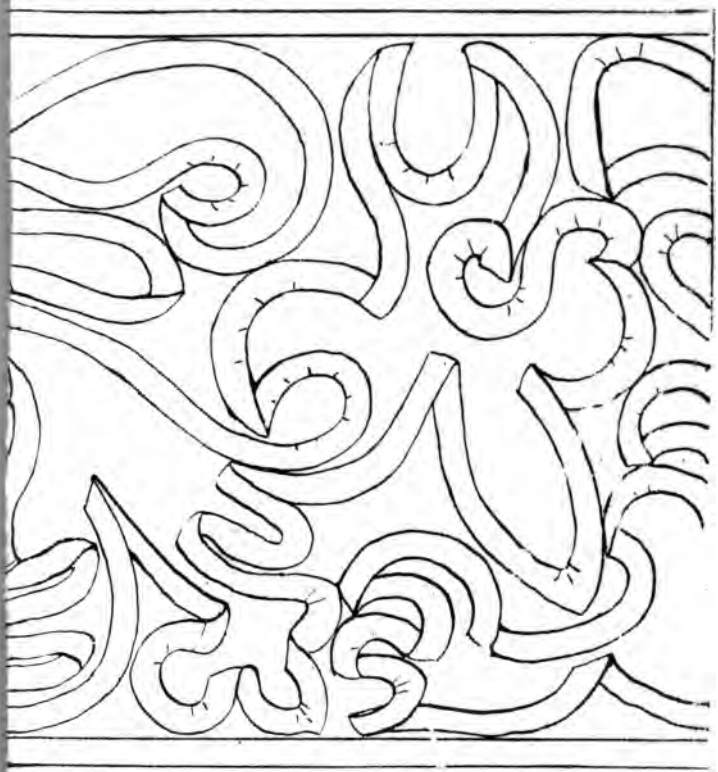

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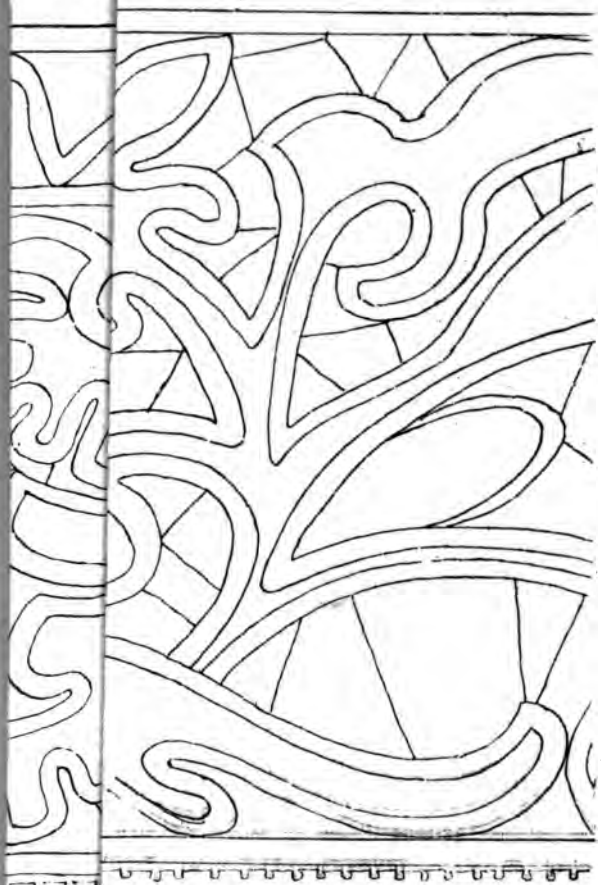

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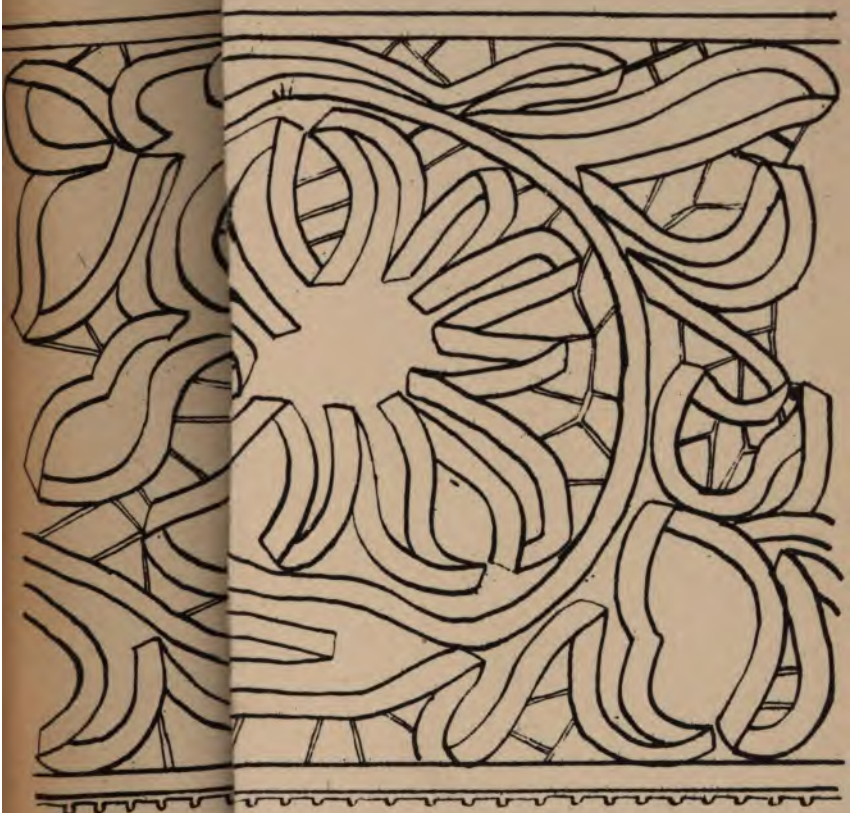

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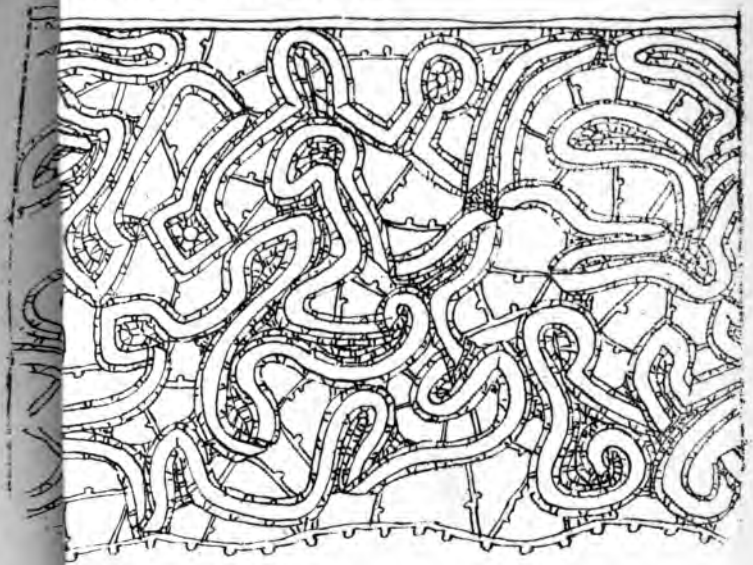

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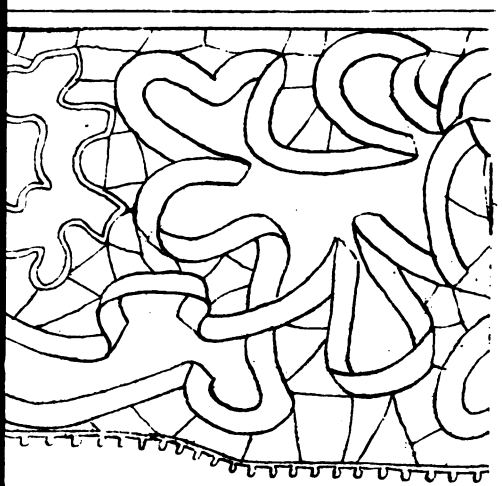

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